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BABYLONIAN PENITENTIAL PSALMS.¹

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I.

SUPLIANT :

I, thy servant, full of sighs, cry unto thee.
Thou acceptest the fervent prayer of him who is burdened with sin.
Thou lookest upon a man and that man lives.
O potentate of the world, mistress of mankind !
Merciful one, to whom it is good to turn, who accepteth supplication !

PRIEST :

His god and his goddess being angry with him, he crieth unto thee.
Turn thy face toward him and take his hand.

SUPLIANT :

Besides thee there is no god who guideth aright.
Look with true favor upon me and accept my supplication.
Declare "how long" (I am to wait), and let thy liver be pacified.
When, O my mistress, will thy face be turned ?
Like the doves do I moan, in sighs do I abound.

PRIEST :

With woe and grief, full of sighs, is his soul ;
Tears doth he weep, laments doth he pour forth.

II.

Thou who hast created the gods, who dost execute the commands of
Bel !

Who dost make the green herb to spring up, mistress of mankind !
Who hast created everything, who dost guide aright all creatures !
Mother Ishtar, whose power no god can approach !
Most exalted mistress, whose command is all-powerful !
A prayer will I utter ; may she do unto me what seems good unto her !
O my mistress, from the day when I was young, much to misfortune
have I been yoked.

¹ These translations differ very little from those in my *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (Appleton).

Food have I not eaten, weeping was my sustenance.
 Water have I not drunk, tears were my drink.
 My heart has not rejoiced, my spirits have not been cheerful.
 like a man I have not walked.
 bitterly I moan.
 My transgressions are many, full of bitterness is my spirit.
 O my mistress, make me to know my deed, establish for me a place of
 rest !
 Absolve my sins, lift up my face !
 O my god, lord of prayer, may my prayer address thee !
 O my goddess, mistress of supplication, may my supplication address
 thee !
 O god of the storm, lord of Harsaga, may my prayer address thee !
 O Gubarra, mistress of the field, may my supplication address thee !
 O lord of heaven and earth, lord of Eridu, may my prayer address thee !
 O Damkina, mother of the house supreme, may my supplication address
 thee !
 O Marduk, lord of Babylon, may my prayer address thee !
 His consort, the exalted offspring (?) of heaven and earth, may my
 supplication address thee !
 O exalted servant, the god, who announces the good name, may my
 prayer address thee !
 O bride, the first-born of the god , may my supplication address
 thee !
 O mistress, who dost curb (?) unfriendly speech, may my prayer
 address thee !
 Exalted, great, my mistress, goddess Nana, may my supplication
 address thee !
 "Turn thine eye with favor toward me," may it say to thee !
 "Turn thy face with favor toward me," may it say to thee !
 "May thy heart be at rest," may it say to thee !
 "May thy liver be pacified," may it say to thee !
 May thy heart, as the heart of a mother who has borne children, be
 glad !
 As a mother who has borne children, as a father who has begotten
 (them), may it be glad !

III.

Because of his face, which he doth not raise on account of tears, doth
 he raise lamentation to thee.

Because of his feet, on which fetters are laid, doth he raise lamentation to thee.

Because of his hands, which are exhausted through weakness, doth he raise lamentation to thee.

Because of his breast, which like a flute pipes forth in cries, doth he raise lamentation to thee.

SUPPLIANT :

O mistress, in the anguish of my heart have I raised cries of anguish to thee ; declare forgiveness.

O mistress, to thy servant declare respite ! May thy heart be at rest !

Unto thy servant who hath experienced sorrow, grant mercy !

Turn thy face, receive his supplication !

To thy servant with whom thou hast been angry, turn in favor !

O my mistress, my hands are bound, yet I embrace (?) thee.

To the warlike hero, Shamash, thy beloved husband, grant a pledge, that I may walk before thee during a life of many days !

My god hath made supplication unto thee, may thy heart be at rest !

My goddess hath uttered a prayer unto thee, may thy liver be pacified !

O brave hero, god Anu, thy beloved husband, may my prayer address thee !

O , god of justice, may my supplication address thee !

O , thy exalted servant, may my prayer address thee !

O , potentate of Ebabbara, may my supplication address thee !

"Turn thine eye with favor toward me," may it say to thee !

"Turn thy face with favor toward me," may it say to thee !

"May thy heart be at rest," may it say to thee !

"May thy liver be pacified," may it say to thee !

May thy heart, as the heart of a mother who has borne children, be glad !

As a mother who has borne children, as a father who has begotten (them), may it be glad !

Penitential psalm to the goddess Anunit.

IV.

May the wrath of the heart of my god be pacified !

May the god who is unknown to me be pacified !

May the goddess who is unknown to me be pacified !

May the known and unknown god be pacified !

May the known and unknown goddess be pacified !

May the heart of my god be pacified!
May the heart of my goddess be pacified!
May the god or goddess known or unknown be pacified!
May the god who is angry with me be pacified!
May the goddess who is angry with me be pacified!
The sin which I have committed I know not.
The misdeed which I have committed I know not.
A gracious name may my god announce!
A gracious name may my goddess announce!
A gracious name may my known and unknown god announce!
A gracious name may my known and unknown goddess announce!
Pure food have I not eaten,
Clear water have I not drunk.
An offense against my god have I unwittingly committed.
A transgression against my goddess have I unwittingly done.
O lord, my sins are many, great are my iniquities!
My god, my sins are many, great are my iniquities!
My goddess, my sins are many, great are my iniquities!
Known or unknown god, my sins are many, great are my iniquities!
Known or unknown goddess, my sins are many, great are my iniquities!
The sin which I have committed I know not.
The iniquity which I have done I know not.
The offense which I have committed I know not.
The transgression I have done I know not.
The lord, in the anger of his heart, hath looked upon me.
The god, in the wrath of his heart, hath visited me.
The goddess hath become angry with me, and hath grievously stricken
me.
The known or unknown god hath straitened me.
The known or unknown goddess hath brought affliction upon me.
I sought for help, but no one taketh my hand.
I wept, but no one came to my side.
I utter cries, but no one hearkens to me.
I am afflicted, I am overcome, I do not look up.
Unto my merciful god I turn, I make supplication.
I kiss the feet of my goddess and
To known and unknown god, I make supplication.
To known and unknown goddess, I make supplication.
O lord, look with favor upon me, receive my supplication!
O goddess, look with favor upon me, receive my supplication!

Known and unknown god
 Known and unknown goddess
 How long, my god
 How long, my goddess, until thy face be turned toward me ?
 How long, known and unknown god, until the anger of thy heart be
 pacified ?
 How long, known and unknown goddess, until thy unfriendly heart be
 pacified ?
 Mankind is perverted and has no judgment.
 Of all men who are alive, who knows anything ?
 They do not know whether they do good or evil.
 O lord, do not cast aside thy servant !
 He is cast into the mire ; take his hand.
 The sin which I have sinned, turn to mercy !
 The iniquity which I have committed, let the wind carry away !
 My many transgressions tear off like a garment !
 My god, my sins are seven times seven ; forgive my sins !
 My goddess, my sins are seven times seven ; forgive my sins !
 Known and unknown god, my sins are seven times seven ; forgive my
 sins !
 Known and unknown goddess, my sins are seven times seven ; forgive
 my sins !
 Forgive my sins and I will humble myself before thee.
 May thy heart, as the heart of a mother who hath borne children, be
 glad !
 As a mother who hath borne children, as a father who hath begotten
 (them), may it be glad !

COLOPHON.

Penitential psalm of sixty-five lines. Tablet for any god.
 His word announces peace to me.
 Like the original, copied and revised.
 Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

V.

How long, O my mistress, will the powerful enemy consume thy land ?
 In thy chief city, Erech, thirst prevails.
 In E-ul-mash, the house of thy oracle, blood is poured out like water.
 In all thy lands hath he kindled fires and over them hath he poured
 (fire) like

VI.

O lord, great ruler, Ninib, may my prayer address thee !
O suppliant mistress of Nippur, may my supplication address thee !
O lord of heaven and earth, lord of Eridu, may my prayer address thee !
O Damkina, mother of the house supreme, may my supplication
address thee !

O Marduk, lord of Babylon, may my prayer address thee !
 His consort, the exalted offspring (?) of heaven and earth, may my supplication address thee !
 O exalted servant, the god, who announceth the good name, may my prayer address thee !
 O bride, the first-born of the god . . . , may my supplication address thee !
 O god of the storm, lord of Harsaga, may my prayer address thee !
 O Gubara, mistress of the field, may my supplication address thee !
 "Turn thine eye with favor toward me," may it say to thee !
 "Turn thy face with favor toward me," may it say to thee !
 "May thy heart be at rest," may it say to thee !
 "May thy liver be pacified," may it say to thee !
 May thy heart, as the heart of a mother who hath borne children, be glad !
 As a mother who hath borne children, as a father who hath begotten (them), may it be glad !

COLOPHON.

Penitential psalm of forty-five lines. Tablet for the god Bel.
 Like the original, copied and revised.

VII.

PRIEST :

In sighing he sits.
 With cries of affliction, in anguish of heart.
 With bitter weeping, with bitter sighing.
 Like the doves doth he moan, in distress night and day.
 Unto his merciful god like a wild cow doth he cry.
 Sighs of affliction doth he raise.
 Before his god he prostrates himself in supplication.
 He weeps that he may approach, that nothing may hold (him) back.

SUPLIANT :

My deed will I declare, my deed which cannot be declared.
 My words will I repeat, my words which cannot be repeated.
 My god ! my deed will I declare, my deed which cannot be declared.

VIII.

O my god, who art angry with me, accept my prayer !
 O my goddess who art wroth with me, receive my supplication !
 Receive my supplication, let thy liver be at rest !

O my lord, gracious and merciful, [look upon me]!
He who guideth the span of life, who stayeth the hand of death, my
god, accept my prayer!
O my goddess look with favor upon me and receive my supplication!
May my sins be forgiven, may my transgressions be forgotten!
May the ban be loosened, may the chains be cast off!
May the seven winds carry away my sighs!
May I strip off my wickedness, may the birds carry it to the heavens!
May the fish carry off my misery, the river bear it away!
May the beasts of the field take it from me, may the running waters of
the river wash me clean!
Make me bright like gold!
Like a ring (?) of diamonds (?) may I be precious in thy sight!
Cleanse me from wickedness, save my soul! I will watch (?) thy court
and pledge myself to thee.
Remove me from my wickedness, and may I receive protection from
thee!
Grant to me that I may see a favorable dream!
May the dream which I see be favorable, may the dream which I see
come true!
The dream which I see, turn to my favor!
May the god . . . , the god of dreams, stand at my head!
Make me to enter into Esagila, the temple of the gods, the house of
life!
Commend me to the gracious favor of the merciful Marduk!
I will bow myself before thy greatness, I will honor thy divinity.
May the inhabitants of my city glorify thy power!